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LETTER DATED 31 OCTOBER 1997 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to forward herewith a copy of a letter which I have received today from Mr. Hans Blix, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency. In accordance with the request contained therein, I would be grateful if you could bring the letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

Letter dated 31 October 1997 from the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency addressed to the Secretary-General

As you will be aware, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has suspended its monitoring activities in Iraq as of 29 October 1997. This suspension of activities was in immediate response to a letter of the same date addressed to the President of the Security Council by the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, Mr. Tariq Aziz (S/1997/829, annex), in which he announced, inter alia, that Iraq would not "deal with Americans working with the Special Commission". Similar action was taken by the Special Commission.

On 30 October 1997, Mr. Garry Dillon, the head of the IAEA Action Team for Iraq, sent notification to Iraq that he considered it to be inappropriate, under the prevailing circumstances, to proceed with his visit to Iraq, planned for 4 to 7 November 1997.

Iraq immediately responded that it found the decision not to proceed with the visit surprising and further stated that it should be recognized that "the Government of Iraq wishes IAEA to continue its work normally and to perform all its planned functions". Iraq's response further stated that "all IAEA staff, inspectors and experts will be welcomed as usual" and went on to state that "there is no reason whatsoever to suspend any IAEA activities in Iraq".

It remains my view that, in the specific context of the resolutions on Iraq, IAEA and the Special Commission act as organs of the Security Council and, although having distinct technical responsibilities, contribute to a common objective. Under these circumstances it is essential that IAEA and the Special Commission shall have a common approach and for the time being IAEA will continue to suspend the practical implementation of its ongoing monitoring and verification plan.

Mr. Dillon's visit to Iraq is similarly deferred.

I request that you bring the foregoing to the attention of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hans BLIX
Director General
International Atomic Energy Agency